

Message Text

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22

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DEPT FOR D/HA/ORM

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SREF

SUBJ: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

REF: BANGKOK 21253 (NOTAL)

1. JUST PRIOR TO D/HA COORDINATOR WILSON VISIT, REF OPS OFFICE WAS CONTACTED BY DR. LARRY WARD, PRESIDENT FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY. HE PRESENTED SOME PRELIMINARY IDEAS FOR RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINA REFUGEES IN NICARAGUA.

2. WARD PRESENTED A PRELIMINARY PLAN WHICH, ACCORDING TO COPIES OF LETTERS FROM DAMRONG SOONTHORNSARATOON, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERIOR, THAILAND, AND J.B. RENE SELVA P. SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENT, NICARAGUA, HAS BEEN ENDORSED IN PRINCIPLE, BY BOTH COUNTRIES. THE SCOPE OF THE PLAN CALLS FOR LARGE-SCALE RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN TASBA RAYA, IN THE ZONA ATLANTICA OF NICARAGUA. THE AREA FOR THIS PROJECT IS DESCRIBED AS BEING LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPIO OF WASPAN, STATE OF ZELAYA, BORDERING ON HONDURAS.

BRIEFLY, FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY PROPOSES TO FUND AND SUPERVISE PROJECT, RTG WOULD SUPPLY THE REFUGEES AND GON

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WOULD PROVIDE LAND AND COOPERATION.

3. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS REFUGEE LEADERS RISED WITH WARD. WHAT INFLUENCE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL HAVE ON REFUGEES VOLUNTERRING FOR THE MOVE OF THIS KIND IS NOT CERTAIN.

A. WHAT ARE GON POLICIES TOWARDS MINORITY GROUPS WHO WISH TO PRESERVE THEIR ETHNIC IDENTITY THROUGH TEACHING OF THEIR OWN LANGUAGE, CARRYING ON RELIGIOUS OR OTHER TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES AND PRACTICES, ETC. NOTE: THIS MAY INCLUDE SOME PRACTICES SUCH AS MULTIPLE WIFE FAMILIES WHICH MIGHT INVOLVE SENSITIVITIES OF NICARAGUAN RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES.

B. A FULLER EXPLANATION OF QUOTE FULL CITIZENSHIP OPPORTUNITY, WITH ITS RELATED BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNQUOTE. WOULD REFUGEES HAVE AN POLITICAL REPRESENTATION? WILL THEY BE ABLE TO OWN PROPERTY? WOULD THEY BE LIABLE FOR MILITARY DUTY?

C. CAN ANY REASONABLE ASSURANCES BE GIVEN ON POLITICAL STABILITY OF COUNTRY, I.E. IS A RADICAL CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT LIKELY? WOULD A NEW GOVERNMENT KEEP THE FORMER GOVERNMENT'S PROMISES TO THE REFUGEES?

D. WHAT IS THE GENERAL ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE PROJECT AND THE RESETTLEMENT AREA IN GENERAL?

E. WHAT ARE THE HEALTH CONDITIONS? IS MALARIA ENDEMIC? ARE ADEQUATE MEDICAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE WHICH COULD HANDLE DISEASE OUTBREAKS DUE TO LACK OF NATURAL IMMUNIZATION OF THE REFUGEES?

F. HAVE ANY OTHER REFUGEE GROUPS BEEN RECENTLY SETTLED IN THE COUNTRY?

4. DURING HIS VISIT, D/HA COORDINATOR WILSON DISCUSSED THE FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY PROPOSAL BRIEFLY WITH BERTA, UNHCR. WILSO EMPHASIZED THAT FROM USG STANDPOINT UNHCR SHOULD HAVE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES OF THIS NATURE. AS POINTED OUT IN REFTEL, BERTA AT THIS POINT IN TIME WOULD PREFER NOT BE INVOLVED IN THIS PLAN DUE TO HIS OVERRIING INTERESTS IN VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN. HE WOULD PROBABLY PREFER TO PUT PLAN ON BACK BURNER UNTIL SOMETIME LATE IN 1977.

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5. THE RTG GENERALLY SUPPORTS THE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME, VIEWING IT AS RELIEVING SOME OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S BURDEN, PARTICULARLY THE DIFFICULT-TO-ADMINISTER REFUGEE GROUPS.

6. COPY OF PROPOSAL WILL BE POUCHED.
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